

of SU offensive force from Cuba

1. In the meeting this morning, there was frequent emphasis on the importance of focusing continually in our planning upon the objective: "The missiles must be removed." There was no mention of the possibility or desirability of defining that objective: "The missiles must be removed," or even, "The missiles must be gone," let alone, "immediately." There are disadvantages in setting such a time constraint, either in our planning assumptions or in our declaratory policy.

To the extent that planners do succeed in focusing upon a single, stated main objective, shortcomings in that statement may have a distorting effect on their work: e.g., upon their notions of the range of alternatives that may be considered of roughly comparable effectiveness. In this case, the statement leaves open the inference that the U.S. is indifferent to the speed of removal of the missiles, to the starting date or to the length of the process, so long as they are removed eventually. Are not

3. To specify a particular date by which decisive action must have been taken to remove the missiles is to sacrifice US flexibility of action. But is that a disadvantage? Can we afford to allow ourselves as much flexibility of action as was implicit

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in the proposals discussed in morning? How can we generate the foreign anxiety that we are on the verge of decisive unilateral action--strengthened by Kitzendach--if in fact, in our private planning, we have set up no schedules serving to remind us of time urgency, no criteria to tell us that the time of decision has arrived?

5. For example, the aspect of the inexorability in its effects of the POL blockade was always emphasized: "It tightens a noose around their necks; it sets the clock ticking." But the significance of the length of that process was not discussed after I arrived. Would we be just as sanguine about the effectiveness of that move if the Cubans had 6 months supplies on hand (the process would still be "inexorable")? Is 60 to 90 days--which, as I understand it, is when the alarm should actually ring on this particular clock--just the right amount of time for a process putting pressure on the Cubans: or is it too much for our purposes? To answer that, we must face the question more directly whether our "purposes" include a time dimension or not. Can we really plan to wait 60-90 days for the Cubans or Soviets

to decide to comply with our demands? (Shouldn't they, if they don't, be in a position to make a decision on their own terms?)

6. Of course, as someone remarked, the Russians may cooperatively keep up our momentum. Or they may not. Our statements and our actions (not, by the way, our plans) either will communicate to the Soviets/Cubans that they must take immediate steps to comply to avert U.S. unilateral action: or they will communicate something

...in that we ... the Soviets ...
... would argue that it does not
... objectives for them to have: the U.S. ...
... that the missiles must ... eventually, that the
... may have virtually no impact upon them. What I
... suspect they are listening to learn is: Will it
take us enough time for us to change their mind? ...
... this morning--taking only what was actually said, not what it
... have been implicit in some minds--might well have been stated
... at that crucial point, if they had heard it. Our own private
... of determination that we will take action to remove the
... missiles "if, in the end, it proves inescapable"--even if this
... private "decision" were communicated perfectly to the Soviets--
... would convey to them very little need for prompt action on their
... part if they suspected that we had placed in our paths very few
... obstacles to escape from that onerous task on any particular day.
... In short, I argue the importance of setting a clock ticking
... for us, and one with a much shorter alarm date than that of the
... POL blockade.

7. A plausible criterion for the time-span that would be
... allowed the Soviets/Cubans (and the US!) ...
... is the time we now estimate it would take for the
... missile force now on Cuba to reach full operational status.
... reasonable public basis (and a sound private one) for our
... need to put a short time-limit on their compliance. I :

...to fulfill our commitment to prevent the outbreak of a significant or active threat to nations of the Western Hemisphere. We do not intend to withdraw from that commitment to a position that would force us to negotiate over the withdrawal of an established, fully operational force, or force us to remove unilaterally an operational force in the face of nuclear threats against ourselves or third parties."

3. Proposal: that the US primary objective, both in planning and in public statements, should specify a short time limit for the Soviets and/or Cubans to be well embarked upon the process of dismantling and destroying or embarking their missiles and equipment and offensive bombers: e.g., one week. A limit, at least in planning, should also be set for the completion of that task. Moreover, to support that objective, planning schedules for the various tracks should specify dates for decisive U.S. actions to remove the offensive forces (naturally, events may either speed up or delay such action; I still suggest that it is important that at any given time current planning include a specific, and not far off, date at for the alarm to ring on the U.S. clock). That limit should be announced soon: e.g., today or tomorrow. During the interval, such preparatory actions as massive overflights over the entire island might be taken: reconnaissance, but even more, to be seen (and perhaps to drop leaflets). *Quoting from the Soviet Union to the U.S. Government*

4. I have not tried to indicate all the pros and cons of this proposal, in particular the possible disadvantages, or to indicate

the required planning and preparatory actions that such a tight schedule would impose upon the U.S., or the risks involved. I wished merely to advance the argument, which I feel strongly (and with which Harry Rowen concurs), that we cannot afford to relieve ourselves of such pressures: for to do so is to relieve our antagonists. We should be most wary in that we do not unconsciously make a bargain or with ourselves to spare ourselves the risks and anxieties of forcing the pace: a conscious sense of satisfaction at having "reached a decision" to take military action against the sites "if and when we have" it could really be founded on our having promised ourselves, unconsciously, that we will not take such an action in the coming week: when it is most anticipated. The consequences, in the course of this coming week, of proving that anticipation unfounded could be fatal to our ultimate objective.

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